

May 3, 2018

## RMA Participates in Annual Meeting of Western Canadian Municipal Associations

*Meeting brings together associations from Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba to discuss regionally significant issues*

Last week, Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) attended the annual Western Canadian Municipal Association (WCMA) meeting in Regina, Saskatchewan. The meeting brought together RMA, the [Alberta Urban Municipalities Association \(AUMA\)](#), the [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities \(SARM\)](#), the [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association \(SUMA\)](#), and the [Association of Manitoba Municipalities \(AMM\)](#) to discuss and develop joint advocacy opportunities on issues of regional importance.

### Overview of Topics Discussed

Fifteen subject matters were discussed during the meeting and the following information is a short overview of issues that are most significant to RMA members. Action items identified will be coordinated amongst WCMA members.

#### *Changes to Fisheries Act and Navigation Protection Act*

Participants had similar concerns about the impact that proposed changes to the federal *Fisheries Act* and *Navigation Protection Act* may have on municipalities in their role as infrastructure managers. Several participants raised concerns about the ambiguity in the changes relating to engagement requirements and dispute resolution. Municipalities in all provinces follow both provincial and municipal regulations, policies, and/or best practices related to the protection of water bodies.

- Action – WCMA members to send joint letter of concern to relevant federal standing committees.

#### *Cannabis Legalization*

The primary concern with legalization is the policing and administrative costs that municipalities will incur. It is important that municipalities track expenses related to legalization to ensure that municipalities can justify receiving a portion of the federal cannabis excise tax.

- Action – WCMA members to send joint letter to relevant federal ministers requesting federal support of provinces sharing excise tax revenues with municipalities.

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## *Agricultural Plastics Recycling*

As Saskatchewan and Manitoba are farther along in the process of designing a recycling regime for agricultural plastics, much of this item focused on what did and did not work in those provinces and how it could be applied in Alberta.

- Action – WCMA members to send joint letter to relevant provincial representatives in all provinces recommending inter-provincial collaboration and the development of a harmonized approach to agricultural plastics recycling across the three provinces.

## *Species at Risk Act*

Most concerns related to the *Species at Risk Act* were brought forward by Alberta's municipal associations due to challenges associated with caribou range planning. While associations from Saskatchewan and Manitoba are currently less impacted, all agreed that the land use implications associated with caribou could be repeated in other jurisdictions and related to other species in the future.

- Action – WCMA members to send joint letter to Government of Canada emphasizing need for species at risk issues to be analyzed from a socio-economic perspective, as well as to consider the challenges of addressing species in isolation without considering broader impacts on the environment related to climate change, disease and other factors.

## *Rural Crime*

Discussions focused on the role of municipalities in working with RCMP and rural crime watch associations, police funding models in each province, and financial challenges that some municipalities may face in relation to RCMP collective bargaining.

- Action – WCMA members will engage and share information frequently. Members will also write to their relevant provincial ministers indicating that rural crime is an issue in all three provinces and that the WCMA is working jointly to develop solutions.

## **Other Issues Discussed**

- Federal infrastructure funding
- Federal/provincial carbon levies
- Motor vehicle collision response rates
- Provincial funding for municipalities
- Provincial drainage regulations
- Indigenous relations
- Pipelines
- Climate change
- Canadian Free Trade Agreement



# BULLETIN

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